



US 70 Corridor Commission

DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER, 2012 M. DURWOOD STEPHENSON, DIRECTOR

The calendar reminds us we are amidst a time of endings and a season of new beginnings. As we close the year with the holiday season, it gives time to step back from the daily grind and think about where we have been and begin planning for the coming year.

Before 2012 came to a close, we lost twinkies, ding-dongs and cupcakes. We endured the great tragedy in a classroom in Connecticut and we weathered the Fiscal Cliff scare (hopefully). It is true the chaotic closing of 2012 brought misery, but there was also events of progress, especially for the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission.

The year just passed in review reflects a period of unparalleled success in promoting the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission agenda.

There were several independent studies completed in 2012 providing invaluable tools for planning North Carolina's future.

- **SEVEN PORTALS STUDY:** Actually completed December 31, 2011, but distributed in 2012. The study explored the value of transportation infrastructure investments in promoting economic development
- **NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME STRATEGY:** Explores North Carolina's maritime assets and the needs for improvements to compete globally.
- **GOVERNOR'S LOGISTICS TASK FORCE:** Created by Governor Perdue the task was to study North Carolina's transportation infrastructures and how best to position our State for viable participation in natural and global marketplace.

The U.S. 70 Corridor Commission utilized these studies as reinforcement for stated agenda. In addition the Corridor Commission issued an RFP for an Economic Impact Study for an improved U.S. 70 upgraded to Freeway status. We were hopeful the project would be rewarded before year-end and completed in June, 2013. An agreement has now been finalized

and award of the project should be within next 30 days. Division 4 Engineer, John Rouse and NCDOT Project Manager, Kristine O'Connor will serve as project administrators.

In a mid-month email BOT U.S. 70 Corridor Subcommittee Chair, Leigh H. McNairy, listed the major accomplishments of the Corridor Commission as follows:

- Goldsboro Bypass is fully funded and under construction with completion scheduled for July, 2015 – a 20 year accelerated schedule.
- Kinston Bypass in the STIP, accelerated with funding scheduled for 2020. Part A of the Harvey Parkway is near completion and commitment is in place for delivery of Part C to be executed in sync with the Kinston Bypass.
- ROD for Havelock Bypass has been reconfirmed by DOT. Funding is available and project is scheduled for "let". On December 11, SELC submitted a letter to Project Planning Engineer, Mark Pierce, requesting NCDOT prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.
- Slocum Gate is now fully funded.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has requested additional navigational studies, prior to permitting Gallant's Channel Bridge. The studies have been completed and submitted to Coast Guard. The "let" date has been delayed until July, 2013. The local community has expressed strong support for the 65-foot fixed span bridge as designed. Bobby Lewis and Jamie Shern are leading the efforts to secure required permit from Coast Guard.
- Strategic Corridor status is in process of being reassigned to Highway 24/11/241 from Highway 258.
- RPO's and MPO's of Eastern North Carolina have unified establishing the Eastern North Carolina Coalition representing 14 RPO's & MPO's (will become 16 in July, 2013) and 41 counties with a population of approximately 2.6 million.
- The RPO's now have a vote on the Concurrence Team.
- A legislative coalition supporting the U.S. 70 Corridor agenda is in formative stage with first official joint meeting with ENC on January 4.
- Highway 70 is positively positioned in Seven Portals Study, Maritime Study and Governor's Logistics Study.

- The Board of Transportation has established a full standing committee of NCDOT for U.S. 70 Corridor Commission agenda.
- Traffic signals U.S. 70 From I-40 in Wake County to the Port at Morehead City:

2007 – 86 Signals
 2008 – 70 Signals
 2012 – 60 Signals
 * 2015 – 49 Signals
 * 2019 – 33 Signals
 * 2020 – 10 Signals

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

- Construct U.S. 70 Freeway on new location from New Bern to Proposed Havelock Bypass. Preliminary report completed December 18, 2012. Final report scheduled for spring 2014.
- Widening of existing U.S. 70 causeway from Morehead City to Beaufort. Completion of report scheduled summer, 2013. Ports expressed concerns about access to Radio Island.
- NC 241 Upgrade from NC 24 N. to SR 1151 in Duplin & Lenoir Counties. Final report scheduled for completion late 2013/early 2014.
- CF Harvey Parkway Extension from NC 58 to NC 11 in Kinston. Preliminary Report completed December, 2012. Final report July, 2013.

We at the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission gratefully acknowledge the invaluable roles played in our success by our Board of Transportation representatives and the staff of NCDOT.

The Corridor Commission approved a RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT, GRATITUDE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO NORTH CAROLINA TRANSPORTATION STAFF OF THEIR WORK ON U.S. 70 CORRIDOR COMMISSION PROJECTS. The RESOLUTION was formally presented to staff at Board of Transportation U.S. 70 Corridor Subcommittee meeting on December 5. A copy of the Resolution is attached.

* Assumes Projects Programmed will be constructed by dates noted.

Governor-elect, Pat McCrory (who will be Governor McCrory by the time you receive this report) was a strong advocate for transportation while serving as Charlotte's Mayor. In addition to his record as a supporter of transportation as Mayor his remarks as a gubernatorial candidate and Governor-elect reflect an understanding of the importance of transportation and the role it plays in promoting commerce. As transportation and commerce advocates, we must and will support a progressive agenda that explores new revenue sources and demands efficiency in spending current transportation dollars.

During December the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition awarded its 2012 Legislative awards to Senator Bill Rabon, Senator Kathy Harrington and Representative Ric Killian. The recipients were recognized for their leadership on transportation issues and their collaboration with the Coalition during the legislative session. NCDOT Chief Operating Officer, General Jim Trogdon, was also recognized for his leadership and support of transportation in North Carolina.

The Eastern North Carolina RPO/MPO Coalition has scheduled a planning meeting on January 4. The morning meeting will be followed with a joint meeting with North Carolina Eastern Legislative delegation. We are fortunate to enjoy the support and leadership of our legislators in the House and Senate and are excited about their commitment to making Eastern North Carolina a better place with expanded opportunities for our young.

Although we recognize the significant role of highways in creating economic activity, we cannot put too much faith in roads alone. They must be viewed in the whole space: where, why, impacts, environment, assets, tourism, commerce and all of the factors that are a means of safely and efficiently moving people and goods.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "WE SHOULD CONTENT OURSELVES TO SECURE WHAT WE CAN GET FROM TIME TO TIME AND ETERNALLY PRESS FORWARD FOR WHAT IS YET TO GET."

This report has documented achievements during the past three years and we are pleased with the progress, but our defined vision for a freeway along strategic corridor U.S. 70 is not yet realized. With the continuing assistance of our membership and dedicated support partners we will eternally press forward for that yet to get.

Thank you and let's continue forward.

U.S. 70 CORRIDOR COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT, GRATITUDE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO NORTH CAROLINA TRANSPORTATION STAFF FOR THEIR WORK ON U.S. 70 CORRIDOR COMMISSION PROJECTS

WHEREAS, the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission supports a plan consisting of a series of projects that will improve mobility, accessibility, traffic safety and promote economic development; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission acknowledges the lack of adequate highway access from the Interstate to the port at Morehead City restricts the economic benefits of the port; and

WHEREAS, the staff at North Carolina Department of Transportation has assisted U.S. 70 Corridor Commission in pursuit of Commission agenda; and

WHEREAS, said staff has exhibited professionalism, enthusiasm and determination in advancing corridor agenda; and

WHEREAS, General Trogdon, Chief Operating Officer; Bobby Lewis, Chief of Staff; Debbie Barbour, Director Pre-Construction; Susan Coward, Deputy Secretary & Intergovernmental Affairs & Budget Coordination; Greg Thorpe, Manager, Project Development & Environmental Analysis; Rob Hanson, Eastern Region Project Development Section; Mike Bruff, Board Manager Transportation Planning Branch; Derrick Lewis, Program Development Branch; Kevin Lacy, State Traffic Engineer; Ray McIntyre, Manager STIP UNIT; Neil Lassiter, Division Two Engineer; John Rouse, Division Four Engineer; and all respective staff; and

WHEREAS, the staff of North Carolina Department of Transportation as identified above are an invaluable partner and advocate for mission and purposes of U.S. 70 Corridor Commission; and

WHEREAS, the agenda of U.S. 70 Corridor Commission has progressed on a timely schedule exceeding general expectations; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the U.S. 70 Corridor Commission hereby conveys our deepest gratitude to the NCDOT staff and leadership for their commitment and dedication to improving the economic future and stability and safety of all modes of transportation in Eastern North Carolina.

ADOPTED by U.S. 70 Corridor Commission on December 4, 2012.

Chuck Allen, Chairman

M. Durwood Stephenson, Director